DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 023 386 JC 680 386

By-Butler, Robert R.

Differences in Need-Press Variables as Perceived by University and Junior College Students.

Pub Date [68]

Note-11p.

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.65

Descriptors-*College Environment, Environmental Research, *Junior Colleges, *Personality Tests, *Student Attitudes, *Universities

Identifiers-*Missouri

This study was made to see if junior college students' needs or perceptions of environment differed from those of university students. From high school graduates within a certain district, a random sample of underclassmen was taken, half at the junior college and half at the university. Stern's Activities Index and Stern and Pace's College Characteristics Index were used to assess needs and perceived environmental press of the two groups in the sample. The hypotheses tested were that there was no significant difference. The junior college academic climate was seen as providing less encouragement for leadership and self-assurance, and less exposure to diversity of experience, such as faculty, public discussion, and innovation. On the non-academic scale, the university was considered more collegiate than the junior college because of its extra-curricular activities, group spirit, and the like. Both groups had generally comparable personalities. The junior college man, however, was more objective toward life and preferred less self-indulgent experiences, while, conversely, the university student preferred sensory self-gratification and involvement in the typically collegiate atmosphere. The results of the study suggested increased student personnel services at the junior college to provide more chance for personal and social development. Although vocational aspirations require quite different academic preparation, the personality needs of the two groups require a similar social background. (HH)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

DIFFERENCES IN NEED-PRESS VARIABLES AS PERCEIVED BY UNIVERSITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Robert R. Butler

The University Of Missouri

NDEA Institute

The growth of the junior college during the past decade has been a response to many pressures. Population increase, technological advances, demands for more education being available to all who may profit therefrom, selection practices within universities as a matter of course or necessity, and the need for providing a program to meet the diversity within today's student body are only a few of the more important pressures which have been influential in the development of this institution (Thornton, 1966).

As the burgeoning junior college moves toward achieving its own special character within the framework of higher education, many questions arise. Educators voice concern about the community junior college being another small university. Is the transfer function the only criteria for academic respectability? Can one institution be all things to all people? To be responsive to the pressures alluded to previously, the image of the junior college needs to be a kaleidoscopic reflection of educational technique.

Students' perceptions of their educational environment ought to be of interest to any educational institution. This

ED023386
JC 680 386

image would provide administrators with tangible evidence for either the continued development of the purposes of the institution, or such modification as deemed appropriate. Entering students should also have the best approximation of an institution's environment. Such information would enable him to make a choice of educational environment compatible with his needs. Seymour (1968), and Ivy, Miller, and Goldstein (1967) indicate perceptions of educational environment held by counselors, faculty, or students are not always accurate.

There are those who maintain that the atmosphere of a college is determined by the character of student it admits. Astin and Holland (1961) concluded that the attributes of the student body reflect a major portion of what is referred to as college press or environment. The question arises as to whether or not institutions of higher education have images, even in a global sense. If each incoming class influences the philosophical role of the institution, then the image is relatively unstable and is a matter for determination by those who come and go.

Descriptions of the characteristics of colleges are not as abundant as those dealing with a description of the needs of college students. Pace and McFee (1960) make comment to the effect that research has resulted in no general theory about what makes a better college environment. They

conclude by asking a question, the essence of which is .... what happens to students in an incompatible environment?

There is an abundance of literature focusing on the characteristics of college students. There are also some empirical findings on students' perceptions of environmental press, since instruments have become available to assess this area. However, the author did not find any research studying the needs of students in community junior colleges, or their perceptions of the environmental press of the institution in which they are enrolled. It was the purpose of this study, therefore, to determine whether students in a community junior college have needs, or perceptions of environmental press, which differ from those of students in a university setting.

Methodology

This study was limited to a random sample of underclassmen within the junior college setting, and a like sample from the university setting. Randomness was assured by selecting students from the entering underclassmen of the 1966-67 years by utilization of numbers taken from a table of random numbers (Tate, 1965). The population consisted of students who were high school graduates from the Jasper County (Missouri) Junior College District.

Two instruments were used to assess needs and environmental press as perceived by the two groups of students.

The Activities Index, developed by George G. Stern, assesses manifestations of behavior described as personality needs. The College Characteristics Index, developed by George G. Stern and C. Robert Pace, assesses perception of environmental press conditions which are likely to facilitate or impede the expression of those behavioral manifestations of personality needs.

The statistical treatment of these data dealt with the differences between group means on each of the scales of the need-press measures. These differences were tested for significance at the .05 level using the t test. The hypotheses to be tested were:

(1) There are no significant differences in the need characteristics of the two groups of students.

(2) There are no significant differences in the environmental press as perceived by the two groups of students.

Results

Means, standard deviations, and t test results for each scale of the Activities Index are presented in Table 1. The mean score of the junior college group on scale 21 indicates more objective personality traits compared to the university group. Those items comprising the objectivity - projectivity scale consist of statements like: "taking special precautions on Friday, the 13th," "paying no attention

to omens, signs, and other forms of superstition," "going to a fortune teller, palm reader, or astrologer for advice on something important," etc.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Insert Table 1 about here

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

The mean score of the junior college group on the sensuality-puritanism scale reveals more interest in esthetic experiences. By contrast, the lower mean score of the university group indicates more interest in sensory experiences. Discrimination on this scale is determined by such items as: "eating so much I can't take another bite," "sketching or painting," "sleeping in a very soft bed," "chewing on pencils, rubber bands, or paper clips," etc.

Table 2 presents means, standard deviations, and *t* test results on each of the thirty scales comprising the College Characteristics Index. The nine scales indicating significant differences pertain to factors descriptive of both an academic and non-academic environment. Scales 6, 11, 14, and 25 consist of items describing an academic climate, and scales 16, 18, 19, 23, and 28 consist of items typical of a non-academic atmosphere.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Insert Table 2 about here

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

The junior college academic climate was perceived as

providing less opportunity for activities in which students are encouraged to develop leadership and self assurance. Diversity of experience (such as student participation in the decision-making process, etc.), being exposed to a faculty of diverse make-up, public discussions, and innovations characterized the university setting more than it did the junior college environment.

The non-academic environmental factors differentiating the two campuses consisted primarily of those characteristics of a collegiate nature. On every non-academic scale the university climate was viewed as being more collegiate than that of the junior college. The items which differentiated the two campuses consisted of such statements as: "nearly everyone here has a date for the weekends," "there are many opportunities for students to get together in extra-curricular activities," "there is a lot of group spirit here," and "the 'Alma Mater' seems to be more important than the 'subject matter' at this school," etc.

Summary and Discussion

The junior college student, according to this study, would generally be described as having a personality make-up comparable to that of his university counterpart. The two exceptions are his inclination toward a more detached, objective view toward life itself, and his preference for those experiences less self-indulging in nature. The university

student, by contrast, indicates more of a need preference for those activities which provide self-gratification through sensory experiences. His need preferences indicate a desire for involvement and the typical collegiate atmosphere.

While the results indicate more similarity than difference in the area of personality need, there were substantial differences in perception of environmental press. This difference in image appears compatible with the intended role of the two institutions involved in the study. These obtained differences resulted in the hypotheses being rejected.

The results of this study suggest continued development of student personnel services within the community junior college. The personality needs of the community junior college student, being similar to students in a university setting, require opportunities for personal and social development typical for college age students. The aspiration to become a lawyer or a teacher, compared to a goal of auto mechanic or secretary, demands quite different academic preparation; however, the development of the social-psychological aspect of a student pursuing either goal should receive similar emphasis.

It is possible that the small geographical representation of the study had some influence on the results of the

Activities Index. It is suggested that further research use a population representing more diverse geographical background.

Since data indicate that attrition within the community junior college is by no means always due to poor scholarship (Medsker, 1960), and a large number of students earn part or all of their expenses while attending community junior colleges (Gleazer, 1964), several ideas are noteworthy. If community junior college students and university students have quite similar need characteristics, as this study indicates, perhaps more consideration needs to be given to increased financial assistance for community junior college students. Drop-out statistics being what they are in higher education might suggest community junior colleges becoming particularly well staffed in student personnel services, with primary focus on meeting the social-psychological needs of students "pioneering" in higher education. That the state of student personnel services in many community junior colleges is far from ideal has been confirmed by Raines (1965).

TABLE 1

AI Scales and Data Analysis

Scales	University		J.C.		t
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
1.Abasement-Assurance	3.69	1.69	4.34	1.76	-1.81
2. Achievement	6.63	2.00	5.82	2.22	1.86
3.Adaptability-Defensiveness	4.91	2.38	5.80	1.98	-1.98
4.Affiliation-Rejection	6.26	3.05	6.60	3.03	-.54
5.Aggression-Blame Avoidance	3.63	1.99	4.04	2.08	-.98
6.Change-Sameness	4.89	2.32	5.52	2.15	-1.37
7.Conjunctivity-Disjunctivity	6.15	2.22	5.92	2.48	.48
8.Counteraction-Inferiority Avoidance	6.43	2.37	6.42	2.05	.03
9.Deference-Restiveness	7.32	1.52	7.42	1.81	-.27
10.Dominance-Tolerance	5.86	2.65	5.00	2.91	1.52
11.Ego Achievement	5.82	2.97	4.78	2.42	1.89
12.Emotionality-Placidity	4.32	2.22	4.18	1.91	.34
13.Energy-Passivity	6.78	1.69	6.98	1.59	-.58
14.Exhibitionism-Inferiority Avoidance	3.58	2.35	3.68	2.46	-.18
15.Fantasied Achievement	4.15	2.52	3.34	2.12	1.70
16.Harm Avoidance-Risktaking	4.52	2.41	4.54	2.58	-.03
17.Humanities, Social Science	6.00	2.98	5.38	2.83	1.04
18.Impulsiveness-Deliberation	4.69	2.19	5.36	2.01	-1.54
19.Narcissism	4.86	2.58	4.96	2.26	-.18
20.Nurturance-Rejection	6.54	2.63	6.50	2.54	.08
21.Objectivity-Projectivity	9.10	1.15	8.56	1.21	2.25*
22.Order-Disorder	5.04	3.20	5.96	2.71	-1.51
23.Play-Work	4.97	2.25	5.62	2.30	-1.37
24.Practicalness-Impracticalness	6.45	2.89	6.24	2.19	.41
25.Reflectiveness	6.30	2.30	6.62	2.13	-.69
26.Science	5.39	3.31	4.38	2.99	1.56
27.Sensuality-Puritanism	4.47	1.55	5.28	1.66	-2.42*
28.Sexuality-Prudishness	4.84	2.51	4.16	2.46	1.35
29.Supplication-Autonomy	6.58	2.20	6.22	2.10	.83
30.Understanding	6.41	2.30	5.40	2.77	1.93

* Significant at .05 level

TABLE 2

CCI Scales and Data Analysis

Scales	University		J.C.		t
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
1.Abasement-Assurance	3.95	2.11	3.70	1.88	.62
2.Achievement	6.19	2.41	6.52	2.47	-.64
3.Adaptability-Defensiveness	5.47	1.74	5.24	2.06	.60
4.Affiliation-Rejection	5.80	1.74	5.56	2.32	.57
5.Aggression-Blame Avoidance	4.91	1.97	4.04	2.42	1.92
6.Change-Sameness	7.39	1.66	5.90	1.63	4.42**
7.Conjunctivity-Disjunctivity	7.21	2.21	6.38	2.26	1.82
8.Counteraction-Inferiority Avoidance	4.91	2.13	4.80	1.79	.28
9.Deference-Restiveness	5.43	1.73	5.40	1.64	.11
10.Dominance-Tolerance	5.54	1.73	5.18	1.81	1.00
11.Ego Achievement	6.82	1.86	5.18	1.92	4.24**
12.Emotionality-Placidity	5.97	1.91	5.92	1.93	.14
13.Energy-Passivity	5.52	1.97	5.26	2.16	.61
14.Exhibitionism-Inferiority Avoidance	6.30	1.82	4.88	2.11	3.51**
15.Fantasied Achievement	5.00	1.81	4.46	1.83	1.44
16.Harm Avoidance-Risktaking	2.93	1.06	4.40	1.45	-5.58**
17.Humanities, Social Science	6.58	2.17	5.88	1.92	1.68
18.Impulsiveness-Deliberation	6.50	1.61	5.28	1.40	3.96**
19.Narcissism	5.69	1.82	4.80	1.67	2.50*
20.Nurturance-Rejection	5.41	2.27	5.02	1.95	.90
21.Objectivity-Projectivity	6.36	2.08	6.60	2.23	-.52
22.Order-Disorder	7.58	1.54	7.38	1.33	.70
23.Play-Work	7.36	1.52	4.84	1.75	7.51**
24.Practicalness-Impracticalness	6.26	1.86	6.40	1.67	-.38
25.Reflectiveness	6.47	2.24	5.20	2.21	2.80*
26.Science	6.84	2.25	5.98	2.37	1.83
27.Sensuality-Puritanism	4.10	1.90	4.16	1.76	-.13
28.Sexuality-Prudishness	7.82	1.41	6.00	1.88	5.32**
29.Supplication-Autonomy	5.52	1.58	5.02	1.74	1.46
30.Understanding	5.80	2.57	6.04	2.16	-.48

* Significant at .05 level
** Significant at .01 level

References

Astin, A. W. & Holland, J. L. The environmental assessment technique: A way to measure college environments. Journal of Educational Psychology, 1961, 52, 309-314.

Gleazer, E. (Ed.) American junior colleges. (6th ed.) Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1964.

Ivey, A. E., Miller, D. E. & Goldstein, A. D. Differential perceptions of college environment: Student personnel staff and students. Journal of College Student Personnel, 1967, 8, 17-21.

Medsker, L. L. The junior college: progress and prospect. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960.

Pace, C. R. & McFee, A. The college environment. Review of Educational Research, 1960, 30, 311-320.

Raines, M. R. Significance of selected variables in differentiating strong and weak programs. In A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York from the National Committee for Appraisal and Development of Junior College Student Personnel Programs, 1965.

Seymour, W. R. Student and counselor perceptions of college environment. Journal of College Student Personnel, 1968, 9, 79-84.

Stern, G. G. Manual for the Activities Index-College Characteristics Index. Syracuse University, Psychological Research Center, 1963.

Tate, M. W. Statistics in educational psychology. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965.

Thornton, J. W. The community junior college. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

AUG 5 1968

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION